

DEFENCE

OF

Powers' Statue of Webster;

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF REMARKS MADE ON THE 8TH OF JUNE,
1859, AT A MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF
ONE HUNDRED ON THE WEBSTER MEMORIAL.

By EDWARD EVERETT.



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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The following remarks were made in substance, at a meeting of the Committee of One Hundred on the Webster Memorial, on the 8th instant. The occasion on which they were made is sufficiently stated in the first pages of the speech. The motion pending was to rescind so much of the resolution, passed with a single dissenting voice, by the Committee of One Hundred, on the 17th of February last, as directs the Executive Committee, (if permission could be obtained of the legislature for the purpose,) to erect the statue in the State House grounds. After the conclusion of my speech and some further brief debate, the question was put by ayes and nays, and the motion to rescind was carried by a vote of 14 to 9,—twenty-three members of the Committee of One Hundred only being present. A motion was then made, that the Executive Committee should cause the statue to be set up on trial, in some suitable place other than the State House yard. The hour was now late, the members of the Committee impatient, and the friends of the statue allowed this motion to pass without a division.*

It was known to them, however, that several, and it was believed by them, that many members friendly to the erection of the statue were absent from the meeting. It was felt that a majority of four, on a vote of twenty-three, was a very inadequate expression of the sense of the whole Committee, especially in reference to a measure so harsh and revolutionary, as rescinding the former doings of the Committee, which had passed all but unanimously, and which had been the basis of legislative action. Steps were immediately taken to put this matter beyond doubt, by the circulation of a paper expressing the opinion on behalf of the signers, that the statue ought to be forthwith erected in the State House grounds, in pursuance of the resolution of the 17th of February, and in conformity with the permission requested and obtained from the legislature.

Signatures have already been appended to this paper, amounting (as about ten members of the original Committee of One Hundred are absent from the country or otherwise not accessible,) to about two-thirds of the whole Committee.

* The following is the motion adopted:—“*Voted*, That the executive committee be and they are hereby instructed to erect the statue on a suitable temporary pedestal, in some public place in the open air, other than the grounds of the State House, where it can be exhibited to greater advantage than in its present position.”

It being thus demonstrated that the very slender vote of the 8th, by which it was attempted to reverse all the former doings of the Committee, was by no means a correct expression of the sense of that body, the Executive Committee have called another meeting of the Committee of One Hundred, for Saturday next, the 2d of July, at 10 o'clock, A. M. At this meeting it will be proposed, on behalf of the majority of the Executive Committee, to reconsider the votes passed on the 8th, in order that the original resolutions of the 17th of February last, may be carried into effect by the erection of the statue in the State House grounds.

When the following speech was made, the motion before the Committee of One Hundred was to rescind the resolution of the 17th of February, and the gentlemen who preceded me confined themselves principally to unfavorable comments on Mr. Powers' statue. My remarks, for this reason, took the form, in part, of a defence of the statue against these comments. After the rescinding motion had prevailed, another motion, as I have said, was brought forward, directing the Executive Committee to set up the statue for exhibition, on trial. But little debate, as has been observed, took place, and the motion was allowed to pass without resistance, which it was known would be, at that time, unavailing.

In the few remarks which were made when this motion was introduced, it was attempted to show that such an experimental exhibition of the statue on trial was a reasonable procedure, and one of which the artist had no right to complain. Aware that such ground would probably be taken, I had, by anticipation, in my remarks, spoken of it as being "if possible, more objectionable and offensive than the immediate condemnation of the statue," and it will be perceived that every consideration urged by me, in defence of the statue, bears as conclusively against setting it up for exhibition, on trial, as if that had been the pending motion.

I maintained that such a course was entirely unprecedented; one to which no work of high art was ever subjected; and one to which no artist of spirit, knowing the diversity of tastes, and the influences by which the judgment is liable to be warped in reference to works of art, would submit for a moment.

I showed that if Mr. Richard Greenough's Franklin, and the statues of Washington by Houdon, Canova, Chantrey, Horatio Greenough, and Crawford, had been treated in this way, not one of them would have reached its permanent pedestal.

I intimated repeatedly that if ever such a trial-exhibition had been admissible, the time for it had gone by; and that it was now treating the artist with cruelty and the legislature with disrespect, after asking and receiving their permission, and informing the artist that it had been obtained, to turn round and rescind all the former proceedings, after a lapse of four months, and set up the statue on trial, as a mark for criticism.

I argued that it was purely illusory, after having denounced and ridi-

culated the statue in public and in private, in the newspapers and the clubs, for months, to expect an impartial judgment as the result of such an unheard of exhibition. Those who have been thus swift to condemn it, who, disregarding the feelings of a most eminent artist and worthy countryman, have seemed to take a pleasure in disparaging his work, would now scrutinize it for the purpose of confirming their impressions, and showing that they have not been unjust. In a word, the proposed exhibition is one entirely unknown to the usages of the Art, which are entitled to as much respect as those which obtain in any other liberal profession.

In addition to considerations of this kind, I endeavored to show, with what success the reader must judge, that great injustice had been done to the statue; that it is a faithful representation of Mr. Webster in middle life; that the countenance—the most important part—was stamped with his own approval; and that the statue itself as a whole, and in the several parts in which such a work could be contemplated, was by intimate friends of Mr. Webster, fully competent to form an opinion, regarded as worthy of the artist and the man. If the views submitted by me on these points are correct, they show that it would be the height of injustice to refuse to execute the resolution of the 17th of February, and instead of this, to set up the statue for a preliminary trial exhibition, which would be simply “to elevate it as a target for invidious criticism.”

It may be proper to observe, that, in common with my friends, Messrs. Felton and William Amory, after the passage of the resolutions of the 8th of June, I tendered my resignation as a member of the Executive Committee, feeling that I could not conscientiously co-operate in carrying them into effect. Having been led, however, in the manner above described, to entertain a confident expectation that a reversal of those proceedings could be had, we have, in conformity with the wishes of many friends, resumed our places on the executive committee, to which we have been kindly re-elected by our colleagues.

I scarce need say, in conclusion, that, in commenting freely on the course pursued by the opponents of the statue, I intend no personal disrespect toward those gentlemen. As the friend of Mr. Powers of twenty-five years' standing, the witness of the trials and sacrifices, under which he has risen to his present eminent position as an artist, and as the agent of the Executive Committee, whose every step, till the late unhappy divisions, was taken with unanimity, I have felt that I was acting purely on the defensive, and doing no more than my duty to my colleagues and to the artist, in replying to the unfavorable criticisms on his work, and protesting against the unprecedented ordeal to which it is now proposed to submit it.

EDWARD EVERETT.

SUMMER STREET, 27 June, 1859,

SPEECH OF MR. EVERETT.

MR. CHAIRMAN—I never attended a meeting with greater regret in my life, nor rose to address one with greater pain. Fully concurring in the desire expressed by the gentleman who opened the meeting, (Mr. T. B. Curtis,) that all its proceedings should be conducted in the most friendly and conciliatory spirit, I forbear to dwell on all the causes, which make the duty I now rise to perform a most painful one. I must, however, deplore that hopeless diversity of taste and opinion, which exists among men. We are met together, all friends of one great and lamented name, selected by our fellow-citizens for the one object of doing honor to his memory ; and yet, while I do the same justice to the motives of other gentlemen, which I wish them to do to mine, the course pursued in reference to Mr. Powers' statue—the course which this meeting has been called to consummate, appears to me—I am compelled to say it—entirely without justification in the character of the work itself, unjust and cruel in the extreme to the eminent and meritorious artist, the author of the work, and disrespectful and trifling toward the legislature, to which (in virtue of a resolution passed with a single dissenting voice in this committee, on the 17th of February last) we made application, through the governor of the Commonwealth, for permission to place the statue in the State House grounds ; which permission, on the governor's recommendation, was liberally and unanimously granted by the two houses. In what light I regard the course which has been pursued, in its personal bearings on the majority of the executive committee, I will not say. I have too long been connected with public life to expect any consideration to be had of one's private feelings, on an occasion of this kind.

Often as I have had occasion to marvel in the course of my life at the diametrically opposite views which are taken of the same subject by men who might rather have been expected to agree with each other, I have never been more astonished with this difference of opinion and judgment, than on the present occasion. Let me, as briefly as possible, narrate the facts of the case. This Committee of One Hundred, raised by the citizens at large, assembled in Faneuil Hall to take suitable measures to do honor to the memory of Mr. Webster, appointed a sub-committee of ten, (which has been called the executive committee,) to consider and report the measures proper to be adopted. They reported in favor of a bronze statue of heroic size, to be executed by some distinguished American artist. This report was unanimously adopted by the general Committee of One Hundred, and the executive committee were instructed to carry it into effect. The executive committee appointed a sub-committee of three, of whom I had the honor to be one, to select the artist. The majority of that committee gave a decided preference to Mr. Powers ; the other member of the committee acquiesced, and a unanimous report in favor of his being employed was made to the committee of ten, and accepted by them.

The choice lay between Mr. Powers and Mr. Crawford, and Mr. Powers was selected by the sub-committee as being, in the opinion of the majority of its members, the most skilful, as he was the oldest, of the living American sculptors;—comparatively at leisure, while Mr. Crawford's hands were filled with government commissions for the new wings of the capitol, for which Mr. Powers declined being a candidate;—and, above all, as having modelled Mr. Webster's head from life, during a three weeks' visit for that purpose at Marshfield; an advantage possessed by no other artist.

Mr. Powers was immediately written to, a contract was made, the statue executed, but lost at sea on its way to this country. A duplicate of the statue was ordered on the unanimous vote of the executive committee, and was received in Boston in the third week of last January. No spot having been definitively fixed upon for its erection, it was placed temporarily in the hall of entrance of the Athenaeum, and in a very bad light. Under these circumstances, unfavorable judgments, as in all similar cases, as I shall presently show, were expressed of the statue. It was immediately made the subject of hasty newspaper criticism, as also generally happens, and something like a public opinion by degrees created against it; the friends of the statue, as is usually the case, forbearing to enter into controversy, and not doubting that justice would eventually prevail. These events took place while I was absent from Boston.

On my return, and on the 12th of February, a meeting was called of the executive committee, of which I was the acting chairman, to take measures for the definitive erection of the statue. Unfavorable opinions of its merits were expressed by one or two members of the committee, but not the slightest intimation made by any gentleman, that the statue ought not to be put up in the most conspicuous and honorable place that could be obtained. The head of State Street had been originally contemplated, but there were serious objections to putting it there. Permission had been kindly granted by the Secretary of the Interior to place it, if it should be so desired, in the vestibule of the building fitted up as a United States Court House; but it was decided to recommend to the Committee of One Hundred, to apply to the legislature, through the governor, for leave to place it on some suitable spot, within the State House grounds. It was not competent for the executive committee to make this application, without authority from the general Committee of One Hundred, inasmuch as this last-named body had originally accepted a report recommending the head of State Street.

Accordingly, on the 17th of February, the Committee of One Hundred was called together, and a report of all the proceedings of the executive committee was made by me, as its acting chairman. That report concluded with the following resolution:—

“Resolved, That the executive committee be, and they are hereby authorized and directed to make application, through his excellency the governor, to the legislature of the Commonwealth, for permission to set up the statue of Mr. Webster on some suitable spot within the State House grounds, at the expense of the “Webster Memorial Fund;” and, in case the application be granted, that the said committee be authorized and directed to make all suitable arrangements to carry the same into effect, provided the expense of the same shall not exceed the amount of funds in the hands of the committee.”

This meeting of the 17th of February was not large, though the attendance was very nearly equal to that of the meeting where the original

measures were adopted in 1853. I believe that every one of the gentlemen, now actively engaged in procuring the present meeting in opposition to the statue, was present at the meeting of the 17th of February. Not a word was said by any individual against the report, or the resolution with which it concluded; and it was accepted without a call for a division, and with a single dissenting voice.

Thus instructed, as the organ of the executive committee, I addressed a letter to the governor, inclosing a copy of the resolution just referred to. My letter, and the resolution, were communicated by governor Banks to the House of Representatives, in a special message, recommending, in a very handsome and liberal manner, that the permission should be granted; a favorable report on the subject was made in the House of Representatives, and a resolve granting the desired permission passed the two houses unanimously, on the 5th of April.

On my return from another visit to the South, I received from the governor, on the 2d May, a certified copy of this resolve, together with the names of the Commissioners on the part of the Commonwealth, for selecting the spot within the State House grounds. I called together the Committee of Ten, (reduced to eight by the removal of one gentleman from the city and the withdrawal of another from the committee, for reasons not connected with the statue,) and to my profound astonishment, instead of taking measures to carry into effect the resolution of the 17th of February, by which we were positively directed to put up the statue in the State House grounds, if permission should be granted (and which was the only business before the executive committee under any instructions of the Committee of One Hundred,) a suggestion was made that a meeting of the One Hundred should be called to consider the expediency of procuring another statue of Mr. Webster! Three of the eight members of the executive committee being absent, all of whom were friendly to the statue, the meeting was adjourned without coming to any conclusion. At the adjourned meeting a formal motion was drafted, that the executive committee proceed to inquire on what terms a statue of Mr. Webster by Mr. Thomas Ball could be procured. The name of this artist was subsequently withdrawn, and the motion, being put, was rejected, two members of the committee only voting in the affirmative. A motion in favor of again calling the One Hundred together was then made, and negatived by the same vote, and a resolution finally adopted, (two votes only in the negative,) that the executive committee should proceed to obey the instructions given, as I have said, on the 17th of February, with a single dissenting voice, by the Committee of One Hundred, and erect the statue in the State House grounds.

At this stage of the proceedings, it was announced by the Secretary of the executive committee, who is a member as well as the Secretary of the general Committee of One Hundred, that he had received a paper, signed by seventeen members of the general committee, requiring him to call that body together, to give further instructions to the executive committee relative to the disposition of Mr. Powers's statue, and that he should do so.

Here it is necessary to state, that in the month of April, after the passage of the resolve of the legislature granting permission to erect the statue in the State House grounds, a copy of Mr. Ball's statuette of Mr. Webster had been placed in the vestibule of the Athenæum, (not, however, in conformity with the wishes of Mr. Ball,) near the statue by Mr. Powers, and an anonymous paper alluding to that fact, and severely condemning the statue, had been printed and circulated, inviting subscriptions to a call of a meeting of the One Hundred, "to afford an opportunity for further consideration, before the irrevocable act of placing the statue in the grounds

of the Capitol is consummated." In the course of five or six weeks, seventeen signatures were affixed to a requisition for a meeting, (which was stated to be "for the purpose of considering whether it is expedient to give further instructions to the executive committee respecting the disposition of Mr. Powers' statue of Webster,") and the present meeting has been called. Since it was summoned, the Secretary has just informed us that seventeen additional names have been procured.*

Such, as briefly as I have been able to state it, is the history of the proceedings which have been had in reference to the statue, and of the attempt to reverse them, which is the object of this meeting. I must own, Sir, and I desire to say it with all respect to the gentlemen concerned in the movement, that I think they cannot have duly considered its true nature and character. Let me submit to them a parallel case. The citizens of Boston, originally on the suggestion of my much valued friend, Mr. R. C. Winthrop, took measures five or six years ago to erect a monumental statue of Franklin; a most appropriate and becoming tribute to the greatest native son of Boston. Though less personally connected with him than the men of this generation are with Mr. Webster, it was not less our duty to posterity to hand down a truthful memorial of this not less illustrious name. Well, Sir, a committee was appointed, subscriptions were raised, an artist selected, the statue modelled and cast, and permission asked and obtained of the city government to erect it in a public square. Thus far, as you see, the cases are precisely parallel, with the exception that, in reference to the statue of Mr. Webster, the more formal step of an application to the legislature through the governor of the Commonwealth, followed by the joint resolution of the two houses, had been taken. Now I have ever thought most favorably of this statue of Franklin. It formed the topic of two pages in the discourse which I delivered in Boston, on "the early days of Franklin," last January, and which was repeated in several other cities. I there expressed the opinion that it was an "admirable" work, and so I esteem it. But its greatest admirers will not claim that it is perfect, nor that no other good statue of Franklin can be made. It gives only one conception of his character, that of a serene equanimity verging toward the decline of life. It gives nothing of the bolder traits of Franklin's character; nothing of the spirit that stood erect before the privy council, nor of the heroism that entered, with an armed kite, into the thunder-cloud. I have even heard serious anatomical defects pointed out in it by good judges. Of these I do not pretend to have an opinion. Now suppose, after all the steps above enumerated had been taken, and while Mr. Richard Greenough's statue stood on temporary exhibition in a dark corner, (like that where Powers' statue of Webster now stands,) a popular statuette of Franklin had been procured, representing another and more spirited conception of his character, and free from the alleged defects alluded to,—had been placed for contrast by the side of the statue of Mr. Greenough, the newspapers filled with the bitterest sarcasm and ridicule of his work, an anonymous printed paper, denouncing the work, circulated to rally and organize this opposition, and at length a meeting like this called to undo all the former proceedings, and to procure the repudiation of Mr. Greenough's statue, can there be two opinions whether or not this would have been a most unjust procedure, cruel toward the artist, a trifling with the city government, and disrespectful toward the executive committee, who had acted under the unanimous instructions of their constituents? And

* It appears that several of the signatures to this requisition were given by persons friendly to the erection of the statue, in entire misapprehension of the objects for which the meeting was called.

yet, Sir, in this supposed case, I have omitted some features of hardship, which exist in the case before you, and which give a still more oppressive character to the movement.

Much unfavorable criticism has been expended on Mr. Powers' statue; much said here and in the newspapers on the injustice which it does to the great original; but the same criticisms, or criticisms still more severe, are almost sure to be made upon all attempts to portray the likenesses, whether by painting or statuary, of very eminent men. They arise partly from the unavoidable—the proverbial—difference of judgment, which always exists in matters of taste, on the part of different observers, and then, in a case like this, from the impossibility of coming up in any work of art to the exalted ideal image which exists in the mind of the observer, differing it may be in each individual, but in all, above the reach of pencil or chisel fully to embody. Let me, Sir, as briefly as possible, illustrate this insuperable difficulty, by reference to the five celebrated statues of Washington, which have been erected in this country; those I mean of Houdon, of Canova, of Chantrey, of Horatio Greenough, and of Crawford. There are other statues of Washington by living artists, but I confine myself for obvious reasons to those of artists who have passed away. Every one of the works enumerated is a capital work by a renowned artist, so accepted and regarded by the public; and yet there is not one of them on which precisely the same unfavorable criticism as those passed on the Powers statue have not been or might not be made, and in some cases criticisms still more severe. There is not one of them which could have stood the test to which it is proposed to subject this statue, that of a preliminary exhibition.

To begin with Houdon's, an invaluable statue by a superior artist, modelled from life, and the only one of the five so modelled. There is a cast of it as large as the original in the vestibule of the Athenæum; every gentleman can see for himself, whether or not exceptions precisely analogous to those taken to Powers' Webster could be urged against it. The head is surpassingly beautiful, and is the classical, standard head of Washington. With respect to the body, also modelled from life, I will ask those gentlemen, who complain so much of the statue of Mr. Webster for not giving you an accurate idea of his majestic form, to go and look at the figure of Houdon's Washington, and ask themselves what idea it gives them, apart from the head, of his majestic person. The fasces on the left hand seem to me greatly out of proportion to the work, and otherwise objectionable; though I utter all these views with extreme distrust of my own judgment. I lately heard this statue pronounced "as bad as a statue could be," by a gentleman of great intellectual culture and taste in a southern city;—a gentleman as likely to form a correct opinion of a work of art as any person in this room. Does not every gentleman already see that with the same local influences, the same appliances, the same means as those employed in the case before us, it would have been quite as easy to discredit Houdon's Washington, in the opinion of those who knew General Washington at a later period of his life, and when his person had materially changed, as it has been to discredit Powers' Webster in the minds of some persons?

The statue of Washington by Canova, made for the State of North Carolina, and destroyed in the conflagration of her capitol, comes next. I saw this great work, while it was in progress in the *studio* of the celebrated sculptor. I conversed with him on the difficulties attending the employment of the modern costume in the statues of great men. He regarded these difficulties as insuperable; he thought it was absolutely

necessary to resort to the ancient costume. This he did in the case of Washington, and, regarding the Chieftain as the prominent conception of his character, he is represented in the Roman military dress with a brazen cuirass, half of the thigh, the knee and legs bare, and military sandals; and in this costume he was insulting the constitution of the United States! The head, if I recollect right, was a not very accurate repetition of Houdon's. It is unnecessary to observe that, in the facts I have now stated, there are ample materials for judgments of this noble work, by an artist who stood at that time at the head of his profession, quite as unfavorable as those pronounced on the statue of Mr. Webster, by Powers; and that if the same course had been pursued toward it, and a preliminary exhibition and criticism insisted upon, the result must for the moment have been as prejudicial to its reputation.

The statue of Washington, by Chantrey, stands on the floor of our State House. He divided with Canova the palm of mastery in his art, at the time when the statue was made, which was before Thorwaldsen had become, by acknowledgment equal, if not superior to either of them. I saw this admirable work in Sir Francis Chantrey's studio in London, and I conferred with him on the vexed question of costume, repeating the substance of my conversations with Canova the winter before. Sir Francis differed *in toto*; he maintained that historical truth and accuracy required that modern statues should be clothed in modern costume, the ungainly peculiarities of which must be evaded by selecting those articles,—cloaks, mantles, and dressing gowns,—which best admit a flowing development. In pursuance of this view, he draped Washington in a cloak; a dignified and beautiful drapery, but certainly unlike any cloak ever worn by Washington; entirely changing the aspect of his person, giving it a slightly round-shouldered appearance; and assuredly, if Houdon's statue is any authority, as unlike life as possible. How easy would it have been by placing a skillfully wrought statuette side by side with this admirable statue on the eve of its erection, and exposing it to exhibition on probation, to raise an outcry against it!

I come next to the noble statue of Washington by Horatio Greenough, originally placed in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington, and afterwards removed to the open grounds on the eastern front,—removed, too, with the full consent of the gifted artist; and this I mention to show the importance to a work of art of its being seen in a favorable light. Although his statue was originally intended to stand in that magnificent hall, the central point of the Union, where, over all other places in the world an American artist would most wish to set up a statue, he yet preferred, on account of the disadvantageous lights under which it was there seen, that it should be removed into the capitol square, and exposed to the elements, although, being of marble, it must necessarily perish by corrosion in the lapse of years, and in no very long time lose all the beauty of its surface; to say nothing of injuries by wanton hands, from which it has already suffered. We all remember the shout of derision raised against this magnificent work. For myself, Sir, I greatly admired it. I saw it at Florence under the hands of the sculptor, whom I most highly esteemed as an artist, and cherished as a friend. I wrote an article, in which I endeavored to do full justice to its merits, in one of the periodicals of the day. I declared that if it had been dug up from the ground, stained and mutilated, like the works of the ancient sculptors, it would be thought equal to any of them; and yet, Sir, the terms of disparagement and ridicule so liberally bestowed upon Mr. Powers' Webster are complimentary compared with those lavished upon Greenough's Washington. They stung the generous and sensitive artist to

madness, as the motion on your table, if it takes effect, will sting an artist equally gifted, generous, and sensitive. Mr. Greenough once wrote me, in the bitterness of his heart, that he intended to make an equestrian statue of Washington in small clothes and Hussar boots, to show his loving countrymen that he was a tolerable tailor and bootmaker, which they seemed to think was the main thing in a sculptor.

Mr. Crawford's superb equestrian statue at Richmond closes the list. I had the good fortune to be present at its inauguration on the 22d of February, 1858; and at the banquet in the evening, I expressed, in the most fervent language I could command, the sincere admiration with which I regarded it. And yet, Sir, I have heard it spoken of in reference to almost every point both of the horse and the rider, and that by persons of intelligence, culture, and influence, in terms far more severe than any that I have heard applied to Powers' Webster; and these remarks have been extended to the figures of Patrick Henry and Mr. Jefferson, which form part of the monumental work. I could, if I were willing to do so, give these unfavorable judgments in minute detail. Sir, these severe critics, in all these cases, supposing them to be competent judges of works of art, forget that no human work is perfect: that nothing is easier than to find fault; and that, with reference to matters of taste, there is almost invariably a difference of opinion, and no where so surely as in works of this kind.

Now, Sir, when, in meetings of the executive committee, I have urged considerations of this kind, two answers only have been attempted; one that they are irrelevant. What, irrelevant to show, by these five capital examples, what might also be shown of all the portraits of Washington ever painted, and of Stuart's not less than any of them, that you are applying a test to Powers' statue of Webster, by which, if applied to all these first-rate works, not one would sustain the test any better than his? Not relevant to argue the injustice of the course you are pursuing against this statue, by showing that the same course if equally pursued toward the statues of Houdon, Canova, Chantrey, Horatio and Richard Greenough, and Crawford, would have prevented every one of them from ever reaching its pedestal?

The other answer which had been given to these considerations is that the cases are different. None of us, it is said, have seen Washington: we are either comparatively ignorant or indifferent how he looked or how he is represented. Mr. Webster we have seen and known; we carry his image in our minds, and it is our duty to see it faithfully reproduced in the statue. But I do not admit this indifference to Washington's likeness. I do not admit that the statues have been allowed to go up, merely because men did not care how he was represented. They have been allowed to go up because they were the works of capital artists, and because it is impossible in works of art that all should see and judge alike. Besides, Sir, this answer strengthens my argument. If the test you apply is one which not one of these accepted statues can sustain, where the conditions of a satisfactory work are so comparatively easy, how can it be with any equity applied in this case, where you have got to satisfy an ideal in every man's heart, and reproduce Mr. Webster in such a way, as to satisfy the multi-form tastes, and recollections of the thousands and tens of thousands who knew him personally, and flatter themselves they can measure with their eye in a cursory inspection, more accurately than an experienced sculptor with the calipers in his hand?

But I do not rest the case merely on the ground that the exceptions taken to Mr. Powers' statue are no other, no greater in kind or degree,

than those taken to other similar works. With entire deference to those who differ from me, I maintain that it is a first rate work ; true to nature and life, in countenance and expression, form and action ; worthy of the great artist and of the great man whom it faithfully portrays. To support this opinion, I proceed to make a few remarks upon the statue, in reference to the several points of head and expression—form and action—costume, and accessories ; for these four points are, I suppose, all that are material to be considered.

I begin with what I consider the least material, and first the accessories—the fasces symbolizing the Union of the States. I own that I do not much like the admixture of symbols of any kind with portraiture, and I do not particularly admire this part of the work. It is a very difficult part of a statue to treat. Most sculptors think a support of this kind necessary to give a balance to the work, but it is difficult to give it pertinence and character. It is treated in different ways in Mr. Ball's statuette, (which has been placed in contrast with Powers' statue,) and in Mr. Ball's statue. In one it is on the right hand and in the other on the left ; in the one it is higher than in the other ; in the one it is draped, and in the other I think not ; and gentlemen may not find it easy to tell, in either case, precisely what the object indicated is. I mention this not invidiously, but to show the inherent difficulty in this part of an historical statue. I must say, as I have already observed, that I think the fasces in Houdon's statue very heavy, out of proportion, and otherwise objectionable.

The costume of Powers' statue has been severely criticised ; in fact the weight of rebuke has, I think, fallen on the unlucky set of the trowsers on the lower leg. Well, Sir, the costume is modelled from nature. A suit of Mr. Webster's garments was sent to the artist, and they were placed, not on poles, as one of the gentlemen who preceded me has suggested, but on a lay figure carefully built up for the purpose, of the size of life, as accurately as that can be measured by as true and keen an eye as ever beamed in the head of man. They may be a trifle looser than Mr. Webster would have worn them to an evening party, but before gentlemen conclude that they would have looked better or more life-like if differently treated, they would do well to examine the effect of a tight fit in Houdon's statue of Washington, of which the cast stands side by side, in the vestibule of the Athenaeum, and also to consider the different appearance of woollen dress in bronze and in plaster, in works of art and in nature. A full length likeness was lately taken of me, by one of the very best photographers in the country, Brady, of New York. It has been thought very true to nature. The figure is so small as not to be affected by the convexity of the lens. A member of my family, and a very nice observer, approving it in other respects, thought the lower garments and boots were such as I had never worn. I was wearing at the time, and had worn for weeks, the identical articles in which the photograph was taken !

The person and action of the statue have been much objected to as by no means characteristic or expressive. The figure has been called lank and slouching ; it has been said that Mr. Webster's attitude was firm, and rested equally on both feet, and that he never, "from the cradle to his grave," stood as this statue represents him. Sir, gentlemen are misled by their recent recollections of Mr. Webster. The attitude to which they allude, and which I think they exaggerate, grew upon him with the increase of his person, towards the close of his life. I knew him a good deal nearer the cradle than most gentlemen ; at least, than any one who has spoken here to-day. I went to school to him before he was twenty-one years of age, and if I could draw, I could give you his figure, down

to the exact shape of the toe of his boot, as accurately as I could give you the faces at my breakfast table this morning. I have his portrait, painted by a respectable artist, when he was about thirty-six years of age; it gives but the head and shoulders, but you can judge from them that there was, at that time, *nothing* of what you demand as the true Websterian attitude; and yet, Sir, this was at the age when he argued the Dartmouth College case. He was then rather spare than stout. Advancing in life, as very frequently happens, he increased in size, and his carriage and attitude changed accordingly. This is unavoidable: tall men stoop; short men, if stout, hold themselves erect, rather leaning back; and a tallish man, but moderately portly, has a sway of movement, which disappears with increase of bulk. This change is not noticed, because it comes on, in most cases, gradually. When I returned from Europe in 1855, after more than five years' absence, I was very much struck with the alteration which had taken place in Mr. Webster's face and figure in the interval. If the change were made at once it would always strike the observer. If you took a cincture weighing twenty-five or thirty pounds, and placed it round the person, you would immediately change the carriage of the individual, and cause him to stand more squarely on his feet. I make these remarks, not on my own authority, but on that of one of the most skilful artists in Boston, and they have been confirmed to me by one of our most eminent anatomists. If gentlemen will trace the person of Washington, as it appears in Peale's statue, painted in 1770, in Houdon's statue modelled in 1785, and Stuart's full length, painted about ten years later, they will find it difficult to believe, without the head, that any two of these likenesses belonged to the same individual.

That I do not stand alone in these views, let me read you a letter from a gentleman of great discernment and of the highest intelligence, who knew Mr. Webster well at the meridian of his days; I mean Professor Theophilus Parsons, of the Law School of Cambridge:—

CAMBRIDGE, June 6, 1859.

Dear Sir,—I observe that there is some difficulty as to the proper disposition of Mr. Powers' statue of Mr. Webster, and have thought my testimony might not be worthless. Late in 1822 I went to Washington with Mr. Webster, being employed by claimants under the treaty with Spain. I had been much with Mr. Webster before, and for some months in Washington lived in the same house with him, and worked in the same room. Soon after my return I left Boston for some years, and my intimacy with Mr. Webster was never resumed. I have always remembered him better as he appeared then, than as he appeared at a later period. I am certain that Mr. Powers' statue is exceedingly like Mr. Webster, as he was from 40 to 50. I have studied it with much interest. The bronze face is as good every where as the marble bust of Powers, from which it was copied, and is better in some respects,—indicating that Mr. Powers had profited by criticism.

Mr. Webster argued many cases before the supreme court that session. I assisted him in preparing his briefs, and for that reason as well as others was interested in the cases, and listened to every argument. I have now a perfectly distinct recollection of his attitude and manner, and in all these respects the bronze statue is perfectly accurate. Later in life he became more fleshy in face and figure; and perhaps, because years diminished the vigor and tension of the muscles and fibres, there was a relaxation about the features, and figure, and attitude, which had no existence at an earlier period, and have none in the statue.

If younger men (and they are now the great majority) wish for a statue of Mr. Webster representing him as they knew him, let it be made. But if the evidence of those who remember Mr. Webster *best*, as he appeared from thirty to forty years ago can be gathered, I am sure that the work of Mr. Powers will be proved to be true to its original, in form and feature, in character, expression, and attitude.

Very sincerely yours,
(Signed) THEO. PARSONS.

Such is Mr. Parsons testimony. I will only add, Sir, to show the looseness of observation, which has existed in this case, that neither Mr. Ball's statuette nor his statue, which have both been commended as standing evenly on both feet and legs, does really stand in that manner. The right foot in both of them is somewhat advanced, and the figure is not drawn up into the peculiar attitude, which has been declared to be so characteristic of Mr. Webster.

I come now to the head—the face and expression—surely the most important—the vital part of a statue; although the extraordinary paradox has been advanced in opposition to Mr. Powers' statue, that the person is more so; that the form and movement are more significant, it has been said, than nose and eye-brow. How happens it, then, that from the dawn of art, heads without bodies,—busts without the person,—have been sculptured to preserve the memory of their originals; but never, from the days of Daedalus to the present time, was a headless body sculptured for that purpose? A good deal has been said, in this connection, of the majestic expressiveness of Mr. Webster's person. I hope, Sir, I am not insensible to what there was of grand and imposing about him in that, as in every other respect; but I rather think, when you come to separate head and body, and claim for the latter by itself a peculiar significance, particularly when cast in bronze, that a good deal of imagination will be found to enter into the impression. A noble head may impart a portion of its grandeur even to an ungainly person; but I doubt if the trunk of the Apollo would be thought any thing better than a piece of well-shaped flesh, if surmounted by a stupid, unmeaning face.

Besides, Sir, gentlemen demand from the bronze what, from the nature of the case, can exist only in the living man. They have in their imaginations (as they think) the image of the great statesman himself,—the whole beaming countenance, the flashing eye, the lip quivering with emotion, the throbbing veins, the heaving muscles of the sinewy frame, all tuned in concert with the clarion voice still ringing in their ears; and they complain that the lifeless, rigid bronze does not produce the same effect upon them. Sir, if you stood before Mr. Webster himself, and the hand of a superior power should strike him into monumental bronze, giving him this ghastly metallic hue, seal his eyes and lips, stiffen his legs, paralyze his arms, and cause him to stand stark and cold before you, motionless and speechless, would you not cry out, in amazement, *quantum mutatus*,—how changed from him whose voice, and look, and gesture, caused your flesh to creep with delighted awe? When you complain of the statue for not inspiring you with those feelings which you experienced in the presence of the living man, you simply complain of it for not being more like Mr. Webster than he would have been like himself, if converted, by some magic power, into bronze.

No, Sir, the head, the countenance and the expression are the vital part of the statue, especially in the case of such a head as Mr. Webster's; and of the sufficiency of Mr. Powers' work in this respect, I happen to have

it in my power to produce a testimonial, which I hope will convince even those who have hitherto been dissatisfied on that point; it is nothing less than *the judgment of Mr. Webster himself!* I had been informed some time ago, that Mr. Webster had, in the hearing of a gentleman here present, (Mr. Harvey,) stamped Mr. Powers' marble bust with his approbation; and anxious not to mistake or exaggerate his testimony, I addressed the following note to Mr. Harvey, to know if my recollection was correct:—

BOSTON, June 3, 1859.

My Dear Sir,—You informed me the other day, that you went with Mr. Webster to look at Powers' bust, in the Athenaeum gallery, shortly after Mr. Healey's great picture was open to inspection, and that after contemplating the bust with fixed attention for some time, Mr. Webster, in reply to some criticism of yours, observed that "it was the best likeness of him that had been made, and a faithful representation of him, at his prime."

Please let me know whether I have accurately remembered your statement, and whether you are willing I should make use of it at the meeting next Wednesday.

With great regard, very truly yours,

EDWARD EVERETT.

PETER HARVEY, Esq.

To this inquiry Mr. Harvey responded that I had accurately stated Mr. Webster's opinion, most emphatically pronounced.

But it may occur to some one to ask whether the bronze head faithfully represents the marble. I have examined that point, passing from one to the other, with care, and I do not scruple to affirm that the bronze is a decided improvement on the marble. There is a certain protrusion of the left side of the under lip in the marble, which some of the friends of Mr. Webster disliked. Mr. Powers, indeed, always affirmed that it was so natural,—so habitual—that the teeth were worn away by the motion of the jaw, which gave this effect to the lip. It is somewhat exaggerated in the engraving prefixed to the first volume of Mr. Webster's works, being less considerable in the marble than those who take it for granted that the print is accurately engraved, would suppose. Still, however, there is something of it, and Mr. Powers, well aware that however habitual that expression might be, there were other shades of expression equally so, has, in the bronze, effectually removed the objection; and the head now stands, I verily believe, as noble and true a head as was ever fashioned by the chisel of the sculptor. Let me confirm my impressions on this subject by the testimony of an artist of great merit, who has himself portrayed Mr. Webster, face and person, with entire success,—I mean Mr. Joseph Ames—from whom, a day or two ago, I received the following letter:—

BALTIMORE, June 3, 1859.

My Dear Sir:—Your note of May 26, has just reached me, and in reply I would say that I have always regarded Mr. Powers' bust of Webster as a most powerful and characteristic representation of the great man. And the statue, which gives us Mr. Webster in the prime of life, seems to lose nothing of the truthfulness so remarkable in the marble bust; in fact, the head, in some respects, strikes me even more grand.

It is certainly due to Mr. Powers that this statue should be placed in a favorable position, and I sincerely trust the good people of Boston will not fail to do so.

I am, Dear Sir, with great respect,
Your most obedient servant,

JOSEPH AMES.

Hon. EDWARD EVERETT.

There is another letter in this room from a gentleman who stood second to no other in the respect and affection of Mr. Webster, which I will ask Mr. Harvey, to whom it is addressed, to read, and thereby allow me a moment's repose.

Mr. Harvey here read the following letter from Hon. Rufus Choate:—

DORCHESTER, June 8, 1859.

MY DEAR MR. HARVEY:—Your very kind note is received. In regard to the statue of Mr. Webster as a work of art, my opinion being that of one unskilled in such matters can avail nothing. As a likeness, a truthful representation—I will say this—it is of Mr. Webster at an age earlier than many of its critics knew him—certainly at an age many years preceding that when our impressions of him are freshest, being the most recent, and it is to this fact that I think a great deal of unfavorable criticism can be traced. It is to me an exceedingly pleasant likeness, for it recalls him to me as I remember him in the prime of his strength and beauty, and power, and yet I think no living artist could portray Mr. Webster with entire satisfaction to his family and friends.

I hope that the liberal and courteous action of the last legislature, in giving the State House grounds for the location of the statue, will be met in a similar spirit, that justice will be done the artist who ranks so high in American art, and who has wrought a likeness so gratifying to those who knew and loved Mr. Webster, in his earlier, as well as his later years, and that the judgment of the chairman of the executive committee, [Mr. Everett,] * * * will be fully vindicated by the action of a decisive majority of the Committee of One Hundred.

I remain, my Dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

RUFUS CHOATE.

Sir, Mr. Powers' head of Webster will as surely go down to posterity, as the head of the illustrious statesman, as Houdon's head of Washington will go down to all after time, as the head of the Father of his Country. You may melt the statue into cents, as has been proposed, but unless you could also annihilate the model, the bust, and all the copies of it, that head, modelled from life when Mr. Webster was at the meridian of his powers and fame, will be the head which will forever fill the niche assigned to him, in the pantheon of the country's great men.

I have no objection, Sir,—nay, I greatly desire—to multiply statues of Mr. Webster. Let them adorn all our high places in all our cities; I think most favorably of Mr. Ball's statue, which has been placed in contrast with that of Mr. Powers. Considering that Mr. Webster never sat to Mr. Ball, it is truly an admirable work. I will cheerfully contribute my share to the expense of putting it in marble or bronze, but I will not consent to aid in building up his reputation on the fragments of that of a noble brother artist; nor would he—I know his generous nature too well

—himself consent to do so. Sooner would he lay down his right hand, with all his cunning, upon the block.

I hold in my hand a letter from the living representative of Mr. Webster, which is expressed with so much modesty and right feeling, that I am sure gentlemen will hear it with pleasure, and feel that it ought to have much influence over them in a case of this kind.

BOSTON, June 7, 1859.

HON. EDWARD EVERETT:—

My Dear Sir,—On reaching town, this morning, from Marshfield, I received your note of the 4th inst., on the subject of Powers' statue of my father.

I regret to learn that, as you inform me, a movement is on foot to prevent the erection of this statue, and in answer to your request for an expression of my opinion to be used at a meeting of the Committee of One Hundred, to be held to-morrow, I address you this note.

The friends of my late father, in Boston and its vicinity, irrespective of party, soon after his decease, subscribed for a large sum of money, one of the uses of which was to provide a statue of him to be erected in Boston. A committee of which you are the head have procured such a statue, made by one of the most eminent American artists, who had previously made a bust of Mr. Webster satisfactory to him and his friends; and the legislature of Massachusetts, at the request of your committee, by an unanimous vote, have granted permission to erect this statue in a most conspicuous and honorable place, on grounds belonging to the State.

As my father's representative, deeply grateful to his friends for all they have done in his honor, to you and the committee for the labor of love which you have performed in carrying their purposes into execution, and to the State for the respect which it has shown to his memory, if any wishes of my own could prevail, I should hope that nothing might occur to prevent the completion of the work by the erection of the statue in the place designed for it.

I am, my Dear Sir, yours always truly and gratefully,

FLETCHER WEBSTER.

But it has been suggested that before the statue of Mr. Powers is permanently set up in the State House grounds it should be temporarily exhibited for criticism, a course if possible more objectionable and offensive than its immediate condemnation. Had you, when giving the order to the artist, told him that his work would be subjected to this ordeal, (unheard of before in any other case,) all the money in State Street would not have tempted him to accept the offer. To set it up in this way, after denouncing it and ridiculing it, for weeks and months, is simply to elevate it as a target for invidious criticism. Every one who has already pronounced a judgment against it, would from pride of opinion, and to show that he had not been unjust, scrutinize the statue for the purpose of confirming his first impression; and what men desire to find in such a case they do find. Besides it would be a step altogether barren of any practical result, for who are to be the judges in this examination by the million? how is their opinion to be collected?

It is said the artist has been paid for his work, and has no longer any rights in it. What! has an artist of eminent reputation, of exemplary life, the most generous disposition, the most childlike simplicity of character, no right to the common decencies of his art? When, since the world began, was such a course ever thought of before, as to procure a

statue, and after contemplating it for three weeks, petition the government under which you live to allow it to be placed in the inclosure of their Capitol, receive that permission, by a formal act of legislation, and then turn round and tell your government you have altered your mind, and tell the artist his work is not worthy the place assigned to it ! Because you have paid him his dollars you think he has nothing to complain of in a course like this ? Sir, the course you are pursuing will inflict upon him a stigma, for which all the gold in California would yield no compensation.

Besides, even on the score of pecuniary interest,—the lowest consideration with an artist who works for immortal fame,—a trial exhibition of the kind suggested, (supposing it to result in confirming the unfavorable estimate of the statue which has caused it to be thought of,) would do Mr. Powers a very serious injury. If set up in this way, the statue should, as you anticipate, sink under the unrelenting warfare so long waged against it, do you think he would retain the dollars he has received from us ? Sir, he would throw them back, though he begged his bread to the end of his life.

I am grieved that this movement against Mr. Powers' statue,—against his reputation,—should be made by his own countrymen,—should be made in Boston. Better had it been the work of foreigners, grudging to this country the praise of artistic culture. But no, Sir, he has been appreciated and admired abroad. His busts, early rising in reputation far above those of any contemporary artist in Florence, led the superintendent of the Tuscan Gallery to compare the youthful American sculptor to Lysippus, who alone of Grecian artists was permitted to model Alexander the Great. When the Greek Slave was exhibited in London, it caused a sensation unexampled in a case of this kind. I was a guest, on five successive days, at that time, at as many entertainments, in the most intelligent and cultivated circles in London, where this statue was the universal theme of admiring comment. On one of these occasions, the late Earl of Ellesmere, who sat next me, the possessor of the Bridgewater Gallery, a man of taste and refinement, pointing to Canova's Venus, which stood by the side of the room, said he would rather have Power's Slave than any work of Canova. I have here at hand, though I will not consume your time by reading them, letters from the present highly intelligent Speaker of the House of Commons, and from the Earl of Stanhope, both gentlemen of taste, and conversant with art, speaking of Mr. Powers' works, which they had seen at Florence, in the most exalted terms, and the latter particularly commending the bust of Mr. Webster, as doing justice to the great original. Is it not mournful to reflect that a great work of an artist, so honored and appreciated abroad, should be the butt of denunciation and ridicule at home, on the part of his own countrymen, and subjected to the treatment which it is now proposed at this meeting to consummate ?

There are many other lights in which the subject might be treated ; but the hour is late, and I have trespassed too long on your patience.

THE WEBSTER STATUE.

[The gentlemen whose names are subscribed to the following paper, fifty-eight in number, are members of the Committee of One Hundred. Additional signatures, it is known in one case, and believed in other cases, can be obtained of members of the Committee temporarily absent from Boston. About ten members of the original Committee of One Hundred are absent in Europe, or otherwise out of reach, so that it may be stated that at least about two-thirds of the Committee of One Hundred, as far as can be ascertained, are in favor of erecting the statue forthwith in the State House grounds, in pursuance of the Resolution of the 17th of February last. It is not known nor believed, that all of the remaining third are opposed to that course.]

On the 17th of February last, at a meeting of the Committee of One Hundred, a resolution was passed, with a single dissenting voice, directing the Executive Committee to ask leave of the legislature to erect the statue in the State House grounds, and if leave was granted, to take measures accordingly. This permission was granted by the legislature, but at the meeting of the Committee of One Hundred yesterday, a resolution was adopted, by a vote of fourteen to nine, rescinding so much of the resolution of February 17th, as directed the Executive Committee to set up the statue. It is known that some members, and believed that many members, of the Committee of One Hundred, and in favor of setting up the statue, were absent. As the rescinding resolution was carried by the small vote of fourteen, which cannot be regarded as an adequate expression of the sense of the Committee of One Hundred, We, the undersigned, have thought it our duty, in this way, to express our opinion, that the statue ought to be forthwith set up in the State House grounds, in pursuance of the Resolution of the 17th February last, and the permission granted by the legislature.

BOSTON, June 9, 1859.

EDWARD EVERETT.
NATHAN APPLETON.
GEO. W. CROCKETT.
WILLIAM APPLETON.
WILLIAM STURGIS.
WILLIAM AMORY.
F. SKINNER.
H K HORTON.
JAMES LAWRENCE.
AMOS A. LAWRENCE.
P. W. CHANDLER.
OZIAS GOODWIN.
SAM'L. G. WARD.
FRANKLIN HAVEN.
PETER DUNBAR.
C. R. RANSOM.
H. H. HUNNEWELL.
PETER HARVEY.
CHARLES G. GREENE.
MOSES WILLIAMS.
ALBERT FEARING.
T. B. LAWRENCE.

J. MASON WARREN.	JOHN J. OBER.
J. W. TRULL.	JOHN H. PEARSON.
S. HOOPER.	SAML. HENSHAW.
T. E. CHICKERING.	J. C. TUCKER.
NATHAN HALE.	N. A. THOMPSON.
FRANCIS C. LOWELL.	CHARLES H. MILLS.
JACOB SLEEPER.	JAMES K. MILLS,
JULIUS A. PALMER.	[By F. Haven, by written
WILLIAM R. LAWRENCE,	request.]
[By A. A. Lawrence, at his	JAMES CHEEVER.
request.]	J. A. LOWELL.
HENRY J. GARDNER.	THOMAS J. WHITTEMORE.
ANDREW CARNEY.	SAML. C. ALLEN.
ELIPHALET JONES.	S. D. BRADFORD.
C. C. FELTON.	JOHN T. HEARD.
JOHN JEFFRIES.	THOMAS B. WALES.
CHAS. LEVI WOODBURY.	GEORGE T. LYMAN,
WM. H. LEARNED.	[By P. Harvey, by written
W. C. BARSTOW.	request.]
ARTHUR PICKERING.	J. W. JAMES.
SILAS PEIRCE.	
A. HEMENWAY.	